

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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R 261546Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1345

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 14272

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KN, KS, US, GW

SUBJECT: FRG REACTION TO PANMUNJOM INCIDENT

REF: STATE 211862

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE FRG MEDIA REACTION TO THE MURDER OF TWO US OFFICERS IN KOREA HAS BEEN WIDESPREAD. MEDIA LINKS MURDER WITH UPCOMING UNGA, THE COLOMBO CONFERENCE, US ELECTION CAMPAIGN, AND OVERALL QUESTION OF US ROLE IN ASIA. FRG GOVERNMENT LEADERS HAVE BEEN SILENT. FRG SUPPORTS US POSITION ON KOREAN QUESTION. END SUMMARY.

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. THE IMMEDIATE MEDIA REACTION TO THE MURDER OF TWO US OFFICERS IN THE DMZ WAS ONE OF REVULSION. ADELBERT WEINSTEIN, WRITING IN THE FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE, REPORTED: BEGIN QUOTE - "... THE TRIGGER-HAPPINESS DISPLAYED BY GDR TROOPS AT THE EAST-WEST GERMAN BORDER CORRESPONDS WITH THE BRUTALITY OF NORTH KOREANS AT THE 38TH PARALLEL. ... ACTING LIKE BANDITS, THE REDS THERE KILLED TWO US ARMY OFFICERS. THIS KIND OF ORGANIZED MURDER IS NOTHING NEW AT PANMUNJOM. WHENEVER COMMUNISTS THERE OUTNUMBER AMERICANS AND SOUTH KOREANS, THEY ATTACK THEM, BEAT THEM, STAB THEM, CHOKE THEM. FORTY-NINE AMERICAN

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SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN KILLED AT THAT DEMARCATION LINE SINCE

THE CEASE-FIRE. IN ALL THESE CASES THE NORTH KOREANS WERE THE ATTACKERS.

IT CERTAINLY WAS NO COINCIDENCE THAT THIS NEW MURDER IN THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE TOOK PLACE A FEW DAYS AFTER NORTH KOREA'S VERBAL ATTACK ON THE US AT THE COLOMBO CONFERENCE. PSYCHOLOGICAL TERROR AND AGGRESSIVENESS ARE THE MEANS USED BY THE NORTH KOREANS TO BRING POLITICAL PRESSURE TO BEAR ON THE US. . . ." END QUOTE.

2. SUEDEDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG REPORTED, BEGIN QUOTE:

"AGAIN TODAY, THERE ARE DOUBTS ABOUT US READINESS TO DEFEND SOUTH KOREA. JIMMY CARTER HAS BEEN TELLING PEOPLE FOR MONTHS THAT HE, IF ELECTED, WOULD NEGOTIATE WITH SOUTH KOREA ON REDUCING US TROOPS STATIONED THERE. . . . THIS BACKGROUND COULD EXPLAIN THE MURDER OF TWO AMERICAN OFFICERS IN THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE. . . . IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE INCIDENT WAS DESIGNED BY NORTH KOREA TO TEST AMERICAN DETERMINATION. . . ." END QUOTE.

3. EDITORIAL REACTION THE FOLLOWING WEEK FOLLOWS A SIMILAR VEIN. TYPICAL PRESS COMMENTS:

A. GENERAL-ANZEIGER ON AUGUST 23: BEGIN QUOTE:

". . . THE BESTIAL MURDER OF TWO AMERICAN OFFICERS AT THE DEMARCATION LINE BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA IS JUST ANOTHER LINK OF AN ENDLESS CHAIN OF PROVOCATIONS. NORTH KOREA IS NOT ONLY TESTING THE LIMITS OF AMERICAN PATIENCE, IT OBVIOUSLY IS TRYING TO PROVOKE AMERICAN AND SOUTH KOREAN TROOPS TO TAKE ACTIONS THAT COULD BE INTERPRETED AS ATTACK. FROM THE NORTH KOREAN POINT OF VIEW, SUCH AN ATTACK WOULD RESULT IN INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION SIDING WITH NORTH KOREA AND COMPEL THE USSR AND CHINA TO TAKE A CLEAR STAND. . . .

MOSCOW AND PEKING PRETEND TO BE DEAF IN VIEW OF REPEATED ASSERTIONS BY NORTH KOREAN PRESIDENT KIM IL SUNG THAT THE TIME IS RIPE FOR REVOLUTION IN SOUTH KOREA. AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING, THE SENSITIVENESS OF THAT AREA PREVENTS BOTH THE USSR AND THE PRC FROM

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PURSUING A PROVOKING POLICY OF STRENGTH THERE. ONE SHOULD HOPE THAT SUCH SOBER-MINDEDNESS WILL PREVAIL ALSO IN THIS MOST SERIOUS INCIDENT SINCE THE SEIZURE OF THE "PUEBLO" EIGHT YEARS AGO." END QUOTE.

B. STUTTGARTER ZEITUNG ON AUGUST 24: BEGIN QUOTE:

"SINCE ITS DEFEAT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA MORE THAN A YEAR AGO, THE US IS NOT QUITE SURE HOW TO LIVE UP TO ITS

ROLE AS A WORLD POWER IN FRINGE AREAS OF INFLUENCE IN
AFRICA AND ASIA. ON THE ONE HAND, THERE IS THE LESSON
OF VIETNAM THAT THE US SHOULD NOT LET ITSELF BE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 14272

PROVOKED TO RESORT TO MILITARY INTERVENTION ANYWHERE
UNLESS SUCH ACTION IS INDISPENSABLE FOR DEFENDING ITS
OWN NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOR MAINTAINING WORLD PEACE.
ON THE OTHER HAND, HURT FEELINGS OF SELF-ASSURANCE
EXPOSE THE US TO THE TEMPTATION OF
DEMONSTRATING THAT IT IS NOT A DEPLORABLE, HELPLESS
GIANT. . . ." END QUOTE.

C. KOELNER STADT-ANZEIGER OF AUGUST 24: BEGIN QUOTE:
"MORE THAN A THOUSAND PERSONS, INCLUDING 49 AMERICANS,
HAVE DIED IN THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE SINCE THE END OF
THE KOREAN WAR IN 1953. THE LATEST INCIDENT, IN WHICH
TWO US OFFICERS WERE SLAIN WITH THEIR OWN AXES,
PROBABLY WILL HAVE NO MORE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES THAN
HAD EARLIER ERUPTIONS OF VIOLENCE IN DMZ. HOWEVER,
INSTANT DEPLOYMENT OF TROOPS THERE INDICATED THAT THE
INCIDENT COULD JUST AS WELL HAVE LED TO SERIOUS CON-
FRONTATION. IN VIEW OF THE COMING ELECTIONS, PRESIDENT
FORD TENDS TO PREFER POWERFUL ACTION OF RETALIATION OVER

FEEBLE HESITATION WHENEVER THE US CONSIDERS ITSELF
CHALLENGED. CARTER'S SUPPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S MOVE
INDICATED THAT THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE SENSES
AMERICAN POPULAR APPROVAL OF DEMONSTRATIONS OF MILITARY
STRENGTH. THIS AND THE DISPLAY OF ARMS MAY HAVE
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PROMPTED THE NORTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT TO THINK THINGS
OVER . . . AND TO EXPRESS ITS REGRET. . . " END QUOTE.

D. FRANKFURTER NEUE PRESSE ON AUGUST 24: BEGIN QUOTE:
"THE BRUTAL MURDER OF TWO US OFFICERS AT DMZ IS ANOTHER
REMINDER OF THE POTENTIAL DANGER OF NEW CONFLICT IN
KOREA. THE DISPLAY OF US MILITARY POWER AFT THE
INCIDENT WAS AIMED AT DEMONSTRATING TO DOUBTFUL
AMERICANS AS WELL AS TO HOTHEADS ON THE OTHER SIDE THAT
CONTINUING TROUBLE WOULD NOT PROMPT THE US TO WITHDRAW
FROM THAT AREA. . . ." END QUOTE.

E. VORWAERTS ON AUGUST 25: BEGIN QUOTE: "KEEPING
SILENT DOES NOT NECESSARIY MEAN APPROVAL OF SOMETHING
IN THE FIELD OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. ON THE
CONTRARY, INDICATIONS ARE THAT SOVIET AND CHINESE SILENCE
ON THE MURDER AT PANMUNJOM AMOUNTS TO CRITICISM OF NORTH
KOREA. THUS, DICTATOR KIM IL SUNG FOUND HIMSELF
COMPELLED OFFICIALLY TO EXPRESS HIS REGRET AT THE
SLAYING OF TWO AMERICAN UN OFFICERS. HE HAD NOT
EXPRESSED HIS REGRET IN SIMILAR INCIDENTS IN THE PAST,
ALTHOUGH ONE OF THEM, IN 1967, RESULTED IN THE KILLING
OF 12 US SOLDIERS.

NORTH KOREA'S BRUTAL PROVOCATION SEEMS TO HAVE
BEEN AIMED AT ATTRACTING INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC ATTENTION
TO THE PROBLEMS OF THAT DIVIDED COUNTRY, PROBLEMS WHICH
WILL AGAIN BE ON THE AGENDA OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY
IN A FEW WEEKS FROM NOW. HOWEVER, SLAYING AMERICAN
UN OFFICERS IS THE MOST WRETCHED MEANS OF ATTRACTING
INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION." END QUOTE.

4. THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL COMMENT FROM THE
GOVERNMENT. LIKEWISE, THERE HAVE BEEN NO COMMENTS ON
THE INCIDENT FROM LEADING FIGURES OF EITHER THE GOVERN-
MENT OR THE OPPOSITION. END UNCLASSIFIED.

5. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE,
THE FRG, AS A MEMBER OF THE CORE GROUP AND CO-SPONSOR
OF THE FRIENDLY RESOLUTION, IS A FIRM SUPPORTER OF THE
US POSITION ON KOREA. THE FRG ADVOCATES THE CONCILIATORY
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APPROACH TOWARD COMPROMISE WHICH IS CONTAINED IN THE
FRIENDLY RESOLUTION. AS A SUPPORTER OF THIS APPROACH,
THE FRG DEPLORES CONFRONTATION IN KOREA AND IS CONCERNED
ABOUT ITS POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES. IN ANY CASE, THE FRG
WILI CONTINUE TO SUPPORT OUR ACTIONS IN KOREA.
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